



When you visit Alaska next summer, learn about the Dena'ina - the early native Alaskans of the Kenai Peninsula. Make your reservations now with Bear Paw Adventure.

Early Alaskans (by the Wise Old Hunter) Some time before 10,000 years ago, the earliest peoples to enter the Americas are believed to have used a land bridge that connected Siberia and Alaska across the Bearing Sea. These connected lands are referred to as "Beringia." The land bridge appeared periodically 100,000 to 10,000 years ago, during times of glaciations. At these times, ice sheets contained so much of the earth's water that the level of the seas was much lower than now, exposing a land bridge.



Photo of a Katmai dig - 8/23/03

The early people did not keep written records describing their cultures. Archaeologists rely primarily on the study of artifacts, home sites and other findings, largely rocks and other evidence that has survived, in order to gain insight into the lives of these people. **Visitors to the Alaska Kenai Peninsula have an opportunity to view some of this evidence first hand and hear descriptive information.**

Today, the descendants in Alaska of the first people consider themselves members of 5 distinct groups. 1. **Alutiiq** (Aleutian Islands, Kodiak, Alaska Peninsula, Lower Cook Inlet and Prince William Sound), 2. **Iñupiaq** (northwest Alaska and Arctic Coast), 3. **Yup'ik/Cup'ik** (Bearing Sea Coast), 4. **Athabaskan** (Interior Alaska and Upper Cook Inlet), 5. **Eyak, Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian** (Southeast Alaska and Copper River Delta). (In Search of Ancient Alaska, Ellen Bielawski, Ph.D, Alaska Northwest Books, 2007)

When you make your reservations in the Wise Old Hunter Lodge or the Moose Cabin at Bear Paw Adventure, you can enjoy a sample of Dena'ina history on your travels to Anchor Point from Anchorage. We will be happy to help you plan this and many other great adventures on the Alaskan Kenai Peninsula.

The **Athabaskan** Region in Alaska is a large area that includes much of the Alaska interior and most of the Kenai Peninsula. The area includes the home of **Bear Paw Adventure**, located north of Anchor Point, where the **Wise Old Hunter Lodge** and **Moose Cabin** have been erected.

Tenaina natives, a branch of the Athabascans, were the early inhabitants of the Anchor River valley and the beaches of Cook Inlet, into which Anchor River

empties. (Anchor Point Chamber of Commerce Web Site.) A newer name for the Tenaina is **Dena'ina**.

Kenaitze tribe members offer tours of an interpretive site on the Kenai Peninsula. Tribe members guide visitors at the **K'Beg Archaeological Site** (pronounce Key-Beg and meaning footprints in Dena'ina.) on a boardwalk path along the Kenai River. K'Beg includes a small museum and gift shop with Native art, clothing and books.

Dena'ina is one of eleven Athabaskan languages spoken across Interior Alaska and the Cook Inlet region. Dena'ina is unique among the Athabaskan language in having innovated many new terms for common things. For example, the word "**minlni**" for water is found only in Dena'ina. The usual word for water in other Athabaskan is something like "**tu**." (<http://qenaga.org/relationships.html>) **minlni ndnun** - "**You drink water.**" (Select the link to hear this spoken in Dena'ina.) (<http://www.lithophile.com/olga/paradigms/d-clf03.html>)

Other Adventures available for Bear Paw Adventure's Guests:

- Guided & unguided fishing
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